
380.70**WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Programs in Iowa****Overview**

Policy

All WIC breastfeeding peer counseling programs initiated in Iowa will be consistent with the policies and protocols described in the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Model for a Successful Peer Counseling Program and will use the training materials developed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). This includes programs funded by the local agency WIC administrative grant and programs funded by other sources (e.g., community grants, foundation grants, etc.).

Purpose

This policy is intended to support the development and maintenance of successful breastfeeding peer counseling programs that provide consistent and quality services to Iowa WIC participants.

Adequate state and local management support

The FNS model describes adequate management support as follows:

- Appropriate definition of peer counselors as described below:
 - Paraprofessional,
 - Recruited and hired from target population, and
 - Available to WIC clients outside usual clinic hours and outside the WIC clinic environment;
 - Designated breastfeeding peer counseling program managers and/or coordinators at State and local level;
 - Defined job parameters and job descriptions for peer counselors;
 - Adequate compensation and reimbursement of peer counselors;
 - Training of local peer counseling Coordinators and appropriate clinic staff by the State WIC agency;
 - Develop and implement standardized breastfeeding peer counseling program policies and procedures at the State and local levels;
 - Adequate supervision and monitoring of peer counselors; and
 - Establishment of community partnerships to enhance the effectiveness of the peer counseling program.
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Adequate support of peer counselors

The FNS model describes adequate support of peer counselors as follows:

- Adequate training and continuing education of peer counselors;
- Timely access to breastfeeding coordinators and other lactation experts for assistance with problems outside of peer counselor scope of practice;
- Regular, systematic contact with supervisor (Coordinators and Peer Counselors);
- Participation in clinic staff meetings and breastfeeding in-service training as part of the WIC team as appropriate and applicable; and
- Opportunities to meet regularly with other peer counselors.

Required training resources

- *Loving Support*© Through Peer Counseling: A Journey Together, For WIC Managers, 2011
- *Loving Support*© Through Peer Counseling: A Journey Together, For Training WIC Peer Counselors, 2011

Policy references

- Using *Loving Support*© to Implement Best Practices in Peer Counseling: Research Brief, June 2004 (completed by Best Start Social Marketing under FNS Contract 58-3198-1-050)
- FNS Model for a Successful Peer Counseling Program available online from the WIC Works Resource System at <https://lovingsupport.fns.usda.gov/wic-staff/peer-counseling>